

BACK NUMBER

The **STUDENT WRITER**

The Author's Trade Journal

April
1923

Gouverneur Morris

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By Ralph Parker Anderson

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A Plot Builder

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**Some Experiences With
Literary Agents**

The Literary Market

Volume VIII, No. 4

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THE STUDENT WRITER'S Literary Market Tips

*Gathered Monthly from Authoritative
Sources*

Doubleday, Page & Company, Syndicate Department, Garden City, New York, has a newly established daily fiction story feature for newspapers. For this purpose Mr. Robert Perry of that company is now purchasing manuscripts of about 1000 words. He guarantees \$20 and pays a percentage on the gross sale, which may bring the price up to \$40 or \$50 per story. Stories must be well done, cheerful, and *stories*. "Four-minute bits of life at an interesting moment," Mr. Perry calls them.

Melomime Publications, Inc., 192 W. Tenth Street, New York, Stanley H. Beebe, manager, has made a slight departure from the ordinary in its new plan of payment for book manuscripts. It offers the author a contract calling for 50 per cent of the *net profits* on his book. It is willing to pay a straight royalty in lieu of its new plan if the author prefers it. Mr. Beebe writes: "We do not publish novels, books of a serious nature, or text books. We prefer books of verse and juveniles of not more than forty-eight pages, and collections of short-stories. We will pay on either the royalty or profit-sharing plan, and do not ask the author to share any part of the expense of publication. We solicit correspondence and will co-operate in every way with writers."

Action Stories, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York. J. B. Kelly, editor, has just sent word to a contributor that he has a couple of checks waiting for 25,000-word novelettes dealing with Western adventure. He stated that he is pretty well filled up with other types of material.

Trained Nurse and Hospital Review, 342 Madison Avenue, New York, was reported in our March number to use no stories. Mr. Pennock of that magazine sends the following correction: "We would use stories if they were especially applicable to our field. Cannot afford original poems. We do bar love stories—yet even this might be qualified by the story. Checks are mailed on the 15th of month following publication."

Brief Stories, 805 Drexel Building, Philadelphia, William Kofoed, editor, is reported now to be buying stories up to 4000 words in length. Its rate is two-thirds cent a word.

Mystery Stories (formerly *Midnight on Broadway*), 1926 Broadway, New York, one of the MacFadden publications, has suspended publication, returning all accepted manuscripts to the authors.

Class Journal Company, Publishers of *Motor World*, *Motor Age*, *Automotive Industries*, 239 West 39th Street, New York, James Dalton, editor, is seeking correspondents for automotive news and features. It is said to pay well and to be prompt in notification of acceptance.

Action Stories, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York, J. B. Kelly, editor, as a result of a recent listing in *THE STUDENT WRITER*, sends the following concerning method of payment: "Action Stories pays on acceptance. In a few cases where we have been filled up on a certain type of story, we have offered the author to pay on publication if he could not find another market for his story. Ninety-eight per cent of the stories published in *Action Stories* are paid for on acceptance. It may interest you to know that we paid more than \$5000 in cash for short-stories before the first issue of this magazine was put to press."

Capper's Farmer, Topeka, Kansas, Ray Yarnell, editor, sends the following: "We are in the market for a large number of photographs of handy farm devices with short descriptive text. Nearly any device used about the farm is acceptable if the photograph will reproduce. Unusual uses for machinery, either in the field or the house, are especially desired. Photographs of beautiful farm homes, not necessarily elaborate, but attractive and convenient, also are desired. In every case it is essential that the name, initials and address of the owner of the farm on which the pictures were taken be given. Without the complete name and address photographs will not be accepted. This applies also to farm devices. *Capper's Farmer* also is in the market for short farm stories on successful production, marketing, management, of both crops and livestock, particularly instances of successful cooperative marketing organizations and community action along these lines. Every story should be accompanied, if possible, by good photographs on glossy paper. Liberal payment will be made for material that is acceptable."

The Isaac Walton League Monthly, Chicago, is a new outdoor magazine of which Will Dilg is editor. Warren Hastings Miller, noted outdoor writer, sends the following notice concerning it: "This is a crusading magazine with no ax to grind. Its object is solely the preservation of what little wild life is still left to us, and for that reason the cream of the authors in this country contribute gratis to it. While the magazine is not able to pay for articles, I suggest that it would be a good thing for young authors who love the outdoors to send in something, the best that is in them, for the good of the cause. The rewards would be twofold: their names and work would come under the eyes of the best writers in the outdoor field, and they would be helping the most worthy cause in the outdoor field today."

Pegasus is the name of a new poetry journal launched by Frank Gronberg and W. H. Lench at 2372 First Street, San Diego, California. It is said to be published bi-monthly but its manuscript wants are unknown to us as yet.

(Continued on Page 28)

Prize Contests

The National Municipal League, 261 Broadway, New York, offers two cash prizes, of \$250 and \$100, respectively, for essays in two separate contests for 1923. The Morton Dennison Hull prize of \$250 is offered for the best essay on a subject connected with municipal government. This contest is open only to post-graduate students who are or have been within the past year registered and resident in any college or university in the United States offering distinct post-graduate courses in municipal government. Full particulars can be obtained from H. W. Dodds, secretary. Contest closes September 15, 1923. The other prize offered is the William H. Baldwin prize of \$100 for the best essay on a subject connected with municipal government. This contest is open only to undergraduate students of any college or university in the United States offering direct instruction in municipal government. Full particulars obtainable from Secretary Dodds.

The Sherwin-Williams Company, Cleveland, Ohio, offers \$1000 in cash prizes for the best letters describing the use of Sherwin-Williams products (paints, varnishes, stains, enamels, etc.). These letters must be based on actual use of Sherwin-Williams products, the object of the contest being to procure material that can be used by the company in advertising. In judging, more attention will be accorded to the information contained than to the grammatical construction of the letter. The prizes are: first \$250, second \$200, third \$100, two prizes of \$50 each, six of \$25 each, ten of \$10 each and twenty of \$5 each. Contest closes May 15th. Full particulars can be obtained from the company directly.

David C. Cook Publishing Company, Elgin, Illinois, offers \$500 in cash prizes for best program features for five Sunday-school occasions: Christmas, Easter, Children's Day, Rally Day and Mother's Day. Short features requiring not more than five to seven minutes to render, suitable for presentation by Senior and Intermediate classes of the Sunday-school. There are five first prizes of \$50 each, five second prizes of \$30 each, and five third prizes of \$20 each. Contest closes April 20th.

Chicago Trust Company, announces a series of awards for research relating to business development, the modern trust company, and allied subjects. \$2500 will be awarded every three years for the contribution which is considered to contain the greatest addition to knowledge and advancement in the field of finance. There are no restrictions as to eligibility. The donors have in mind bank officers, business executives, attorneys, commercial teachers and graduate students in the field of economics and finance as possible contributors. There will be an annual first prize of \$300 and a second of \$200 for briefer studies restricted to bank employees and students in schools of commerce, law and economics. The contest is being conducted under the supervision of a committee of which Prof. Ralph E. Hellman of Northwestern University is chairman. Inquiries should be addressed to Prof. Leverett S. Lyon, Faculty Exchange, University of Chicago.

Forest Theater, Carmel, California, announces that its \$100 prize for a play suitable for presentation on its outdoor stage has been awarded to Helen Coale Crew (Mrs. Henry Crew) of Evanston, Illinois, for her poetic drama "The Cradle," laid in Thirteenth Century Italy, dealing with Saint Francis and the Children's Crusade.

Outers'-Recreation, 500 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, announces the winners in its \$3000 prize contest as follows: first prize of \$1000 to Edwin L. Sabin for "The Song of Roland"; second prize of \$600 to H. F. Miners for "The Ghost Bear of Cataract Lake"; third prize of \$400 to Archibald Rutledge for "Kings of Curlew Island"; fourth prize of \$300 to T. Morris Longstretch for "One Path to Paradise." The other prizes were awarded as follows: fifth to Jesse H. Wells, sixth to Robert E. Pinkerton, seventh to C. Macauley, eighth to C. H. Landon.

The Haversack and *The Torchbearer*, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tennessee, announce the outcome of their joint prize contest as follows: For *The Haversack* (best story of 2500 to 3000 words for boys of 10 to 17 years): first prize of \$160 to Archibald Rutledge; second prize of \$90 to Edith Bishop Sherman; third prize of \$50 to Nelson R. Protheroe. For *The Torchbearer* (best story for girls of 10 to 17 years): first prize of \$160 to Mildred Harrington; second prize of \$90 to Margaret Lee Alison; third prize of \$50 to Dora O. Thompson.

G. S. Haskins Productions, 1775 Orchid Avenue, Hollywood, California, offers three prizes of \$125, \$50, and \$25 for the best, next, and third best second choruses for the theme song, "Just Like a Woman." The words should show the different ways in which the expression "just like a woman" can be used and they must fit the music of the song, which can be had at dealers.

The General Land Corporation, Home Public Market Building, 14th and California Streets, Denver (\$150), situated twenty miles from Denver, tover, Colorado, offers two lots in Moss Rock (value the writer of the best words and melody for a waltz song to be entitled, "I Want a Little Mountain Home Up On Genesee." Mt. Genesee is Denver's own mountain, and one of the show places of the Mountain parks. A ski tournament is held on the slopes of Genesee every winter. Moss Rock is located just across the road from Genesee. Complete information concerning the contest may be had by writing to the above address. Contest closes May 1, 1923.

The \$2000 annual award made by *The Dial* for the most significant literary work produced during the year by one of its contributors goes this year to T. S. Eliot, an American, who now resides in London. Mr. Eliot's poem, "The Waste Land," will soon be published by a New York publishing house, with extensive notes by the poet.

Stars & Stripes, Washington, D. C., R. S. Jones, editor, writes that the publication is not now conducting any contests; neither is it buying any contributed material, not specifically ordered.

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STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

NOTHING can be published of greater value to the writer, no matter how far advanced, than an editorial statement of standards and preferences. As a contributor to the present issue of THE STUDENT WRITER comments, an editor is the purchasing agent. He is the man who buys what authors have to sell. His standards may occasionally be wrong—but, right or wrong, they determine the fate of a manuscript. Therefore, if the writer would sell his work, he must know what these standards are.

That is why THE STUDENT WRITER frequently publishes articles from editorial pens or interviews with editors, telling what they want, how they judge manuscripts, and what qualities they look for in submitted material.

In the May STUDENT WRITER A. H. Bittner, assistant editor of *Short Stories Magazine*, will tell readers a lot of interesting things about the standards by which editors in general judge stories, and particularly what the *Short Stories* staff desires in the way of material. He closes with an invitation to STUDENT WRITER readers which will be gratefully received, we feel sure. All in all, the article is extremely valuable, especially in showing the relation of plot to an acceptable story.

During 1922 we published a number of articles by Professor Walter B. Pitkin, noted authority on the short-story, and his associate, Thomas H. Uzzell. These articles proved extremely popular. So many requests for "more" were received, that we have arranged with Mr. Uzzell for a series of six articles on the technique and composition of the short-story. The first of this new series will appear in the May issue. It reveals Mr. Uzzell at his best, as we are sure readers will agree.

Space permits mention of only a few of the features secured for this and future issues. Although a high standard for the quality of its contents was aimed at by THE STUDENT WRITER during 1922, we believe that an even higher mark will be attained during 1923.

The best and most up-to-date market tips, of course.

Gouverneur Morris on Working With the Subconscious Mind

"Know Your Characters," Counsels the Famous Author; "the Right Characters Will Work Out a Plot, Almost of Their Own Accord"

An Interview by Ralph Parker Anderson

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS, who for some years has ranked among our leading writers of short-stories and novels, believes that every author should learn how to take fullest advantage of the faculties of the subconscious mind.

"We know so little about the subconscious," he told me in the lobby of a San Francisco hotel, "that I won't venture to give any explanation of its operation. I can only give that name to that part of my mind which helps my conscious mind in the working out of stories.

"I let an idea simmer in my mind for days, weeks, or even months. Sometimes I seem to have forgotten it entirely, but, as a matter of fact, it is constantly shaping itself in my subconscious mind. Eventually the subconscious mind turns the idea over to the conscious mind in shape suitable for story-writing."

Morris speaks slowly and enunciates each word distinctly. He is as handsome as one of his own heroes, and, although his name has been synonymous with "famous author" for well over a dozen years, he is still a young man.

The first impression that one gets of Gouverneur Morris is that he is a thinker. He always looks thoughtful, and has that rare habit of thinking over a thing before expressing himself in words. He is apparently never hurried or excited, and his manner is always courteous and considerate.

"How do you get your effective ideas?" I asked.

"I don't have any effective ones!" he modestly laughed. "But, seriously, that is a difficult question to answer.

"An idea may result from some incident in my life, it may be suggested by a phrase, or it may be the development of a theme. It may start with a situation as the basis. Or it may come from nowhere in particular.

"But, most often, the idea and story are

developed by an interesting fictitious character or characters. I might say that the right characters will work out a plot of their own.

"This brings me to an important thing in writing: Know your characters. A writer should know his characters much better than he knows his acquaintances and friends.

"He should be intimate with each character—should know much more about them than the reader later learns from the story. Even though the story covers only a period of a month in the leading character's life, the author should know his life-history and even something about the character's parents! If an author does not know his characters, he is certain to fall short of success, for a character who is not real to the author cannot seem lifelike to the reader.

"And the writer must concentrate. He must eliminate thought about every thing except his story and its people."

"Do you think that character development is the most important thing in writing?"

"Yes," the author answered. "One indication of that is that even a poor story can be 'put over' if it has real characters."

WHAT suggestions have you about definite methods of giving realism to characters?"

"It's something that can't be added to a story artificially," Gouverneur Morris answered slowly. "The realism must be the overflow of the superabundance of knowledge that the author has about the characters.

"Give your characters eccentricities that will make them stand out in the reader's memory. One may have a peculiar walk, or an odd tone of voice. Another may have a habit of drumming with his fingers as he

talks, while the third may have most unusual ears!"

"What can you tell us about the technique of fiction-writing?" was my next question.

"It's all told in 'Alice in Wonderland,'" Morris answered.

"In 'Alice in Wonderland'?" I repeated, puzzled.

"It's in the part," Morris explained, "where the judge says to Alice, 'Begin at the beginning, go on to the end and then stop.' That summarizes several important rules in writing. It's a simple rule, but it's often violated. Think how many writers ramble on for pages before they come to the real beginning. Hundreds of others ramble into many bypaths instead of 'going on to the end.' Countless good stories lose their effect because the author doesn't stop at the logical end.

"When I was still an amateur at writing, the necessity of 'beginning at the beginning' was made clear to me in an unusual manner. One day I lost the first three pages of one of my stories. To my surprise, I saw that the fourth page made an interesting and logical beginning.

"Thereafter, I started my stories freely and when I arrived at the fourth page I always found that I had a splendid opening paragraph. Then I tore up the first three pages. Now, fortunately, I can start, so to speak, with the fourth page, so prevent unnecessary work."

IT was evident that Gouverneur Morris is intensely interested in writing as an art, as a game, and as a business. He drifted from one angle to another.

"An author should consider writing a business," he said. "He should handle his work systematically and should have regular hours. I write every morning, after breakfast, until I am tired. I have heard that Mary Rhinehart keeps regular business hours at an office—goes to it every working day and writes."

Morris is one of the "eminent authors"

who have been writing for the screen. He said that the "big money" in writing is being made in the photoplay world, but that movie methods and ideas are likely to irritate the artistic writer. His comments reminded me of the writer who secured his best ideas from the motion-picture productions of his own stories.

"The day of the writer who specializes in screen work is coming," Morris said. "That is only natural, for photoplay writing requires special training."

Morris is interested in everything. Perhaps that is one reason for his success. A mention of Jack Dempsey brought out the fact that Morris had met him, and that led to a discussion of pugilists in general. Then he discussed Joseph Hergesheimer, Frederick O'Brien, and Harold Bell Wright. (A great combination!) Then Morris told about an interesting person he had met that day—a woman Chinese doctor.

It developed that Morris is not enthusiastic about prohibition, because "it has made us a nation of lawbreakers." When it was suggested that smoking might be banned within ten years, Morris earnestly said that, if such a thing happened, he could never write another word! He simply had to smoke while he wrote.

"An author," Morris mused, again coming back to the subject close to his heart, "should develop a jargon of his own. He should be a specialist. His name should be a synonym for a certain style.

"Theme is one of the biggest things in writing. Generally speaking, a story without any theme lacks a backbone—lacks strength. I don't mean that every story should have 'a message' but that it should have a—a backbone!"

"Many people—writers included—have attempted to make writing a thing of mystery. There's no mystery about it! It's just a business that requires a more than usual amount of hard work and imagination."

At parting, Gouverneur Morris summed up:

"Know your characters!"

Function and Management of Clews

*Not Alone in Detective Fiction, but in Every Type of Story, is
the Clew an Important Structural Device; Examples
Illustrating the Principles of Its Use*

By Graves Glenwood Clark

IN detective stories we are all familiar with the hero-sleuth and his painstaking search for the insignificant trifles that indicate when, why, how and by whom the crime was committed. The hasty, nonanalytical reader may assume that the footprints in the mud and the bloody finger-marks on the window-sill were inserted in the story solely for the detective's benefit, since without them he could never have made his astounding deductions and ferreted out the criminal. The clews, of course, are sprinkled about in a detective story to aid the detective, but those same pointers were devised and planted in conspicuous places quite as much to beguile the reader into an attempt to get ahead of the astute detective in solving the mystery.

To prepare the reader's mind for the various happenings of the story, to make him believe the fiction and accept it as true-seeming and its occurrences inevitable, fiction-writers have borrowed a hint from the detective tale and carried over its use of clew into every type of story. For unifying the body of the tale, and welding its incidents into a coherent whole, while inseminating the reader's mind with the information and emotional mood necessary to a complete enjoyment of the fiction, there are few structural devices more valuable than clew. If the author will but master the function and management of clew, he will be able to solve more easily the three great problems of the story body—proportion, emphasis and unity.

Divorced from its restricted, technical aspect in detective fiction, and considered in its widest literary sense, clew may be defined as the preparatory dialogue, incident or authorial hint that indicates, with varying degrees of clearness, the action which is yet to come, or introduces a needed bit of stage property.

The function of the clew, as appears from the definition given, is to prepare and attune the reader for the logical unfolding of the story. In its office of informational preparation, clew closely resembles exposition, a device which is also used for giving information to the reader. There is a sharp distinction between exposition and clew, however, in that exposition relates to past or present action in the series of story happenings, and concerns itself with foundation facts without which the present action would be unintelligible. The clew, in contradistinction, always points to the future, to what is yet to come, and smooths the way for the introduction of new events in the continuously unfolding narrative. Exposition and clew may be used together as in Kipling's "Without Benefit of Clergy." The opening dialogue of this story, and the first few paragraphs, are purely expository because they define the present relationships of Ameera and her English lover. They convey information needed for an understanding of the story. Toward the close of the exposition, when Ameera's mother declares that Holden "will some day return to his own people, but that day, please God, is yet afar off," Kipling inserts a true clew. This one sentence in contrast to the others is forward-looking. It peers into the future and sounds the true import of the story, anticipating Holden's return to his European kith and kin after the death of Ameera and his half-breed son, Tota. It is a true clew, and not a bit of exposition, although it is embedded in a paragraph of purely expository writing.

TO attune the reader's mind to the outcome of the fiction, some explanatory hinting is necessary, else the denouement may strike him unawares and all the story appear unnatural and forced. Adequate

motivation will do much to add convincingness and a sense of inevitability to the narrative, but clews sown through the story at strategic points will gently inform the reader what he is to expect. Consequently the story trickles through his mind in an easy, understandable way. By adroit suggestion he is led to expect the forthcoming event, and he is pleased when his expectation is gratified. He thinks he has been clever enough to foresee the action, while the truth is that the scheming author has been gently leading him along the path preordained for him.

Important as is its function in preparing for the outcome by sounding the fundamental tone mood and anticipating theme dramatization, the clew is even more important in familiarizing the reader with certain stage properties vital to the action. It will not do for the author to wait till a bit of material is needed, or a weapon required, before bringing it to the reader's attention. The author should have carefully prepared the way for the use of such object, and should have shown it to the reader long before it was actually needed. And here again clew proves its value.

In "Guam and Effie," one of the stories in Harriet Welles's volume, "Anchors Aweigh," there is a very effective introduction of the pistol that plays such a fatal part in the catastrophe. Miss Welles got her effect through the careful use of clews. Before she began to write the story, this author knew that her heroine was to be shot with that pistol. She knew, too, that if she waited till the moment of need and then abruptly brought in the weapon, the reader would feel offended and call her story theatric, forced and unnatural. To prepare for the shot and accustom the reader to the presence of the pistol in the home of the heroine, the author introduced the weapon very early in the story. When Effie first comes to Guam and goes to look at her new home, the characters, in talking about the appearance of the sitting-room, remark on the pistol and the native daggers as part of the decorative effects of the place. The introduction of the weapon is so natural that the reader pays no particular attention to it. It is merely part of the room's furnishings and is forgotten in the progress of the narrative. Nevertheless, its presence has been sown in the reader's unconscious mind, and

that information is on tap ready to be used when needed.

A little farther on, Effie is to be left alone till late while her husband is at the office. She says she will not be afraid, for she will take down the rusty old firearm and be prepared for any intruder. Almost immediately afterward the villain knocks at the door and Effie receives him with the pistol in her hand, half seriously and half jokingly declaring she was all prepared for him. The pistol is placed on the table and the two engage in conversation. For the second and third time the pistol has been brought to the reader's attention, each time with increasing emphasis. Note, also, how carefully the weapon has been placed for use at the proper moment.

Now comes the great scene of the story. The major tries to persuade Effie to abandon her husband and to flee with him to America on the transport that is just about to sail. Effie refuses, and while the officer is still entreating her to follow him the husband enters, hears the conversation and orders the villain to leave the premises. In fear of man-handling by the outraged husband, the major snatches at the pistol on the table and accidentally discharges it into the body of Effie, who later dies of the wound. It was only at this particular instant that the pistol was really needed, but look at the careful stages in its introduction: first, a mere ornament on the walls; next, we see it in Effie's hands; then it is placed on the table, and it is only after these three appearances that it is seized and put to its full use. The pistol-shot does not seem forced, unnatural, or unnecessary. It has been made to fit in unobtrusively with the story's plan and does not appear to have been manufactured solely for a dramatic purpose.

IN any well-written story various clews of this nature will be found, each serving to strike the tone of the story or to introduce a needed stage property. The chief difficulty in using a clew to bring on stage properties is to make it unobtrusively introduce the object required and to make such object more and more prominent as the time for the object's use approaches.

The ideal clew, besides forecasting the coming event and preparing for the introduction of vital stage properties, will also have an interest and vitality of its own. It forwards the story and also springs an individual surprise. Some excellent examples

of the dialogic clew that anticipates future events and introduces a stage property are to be found in Poe's fiction, "The Cask of Amontillado." Soon after the cough clew—the incident wherein Montresor counsels his victim to return lest he catch cold in the underground vault, and the ill-fated Fortunato refuses, saying, "I shall not die of a cough," to which the murderer replies, "True, true, you will not die of a cough"—we have the trowel incident. It will be remembered that Fortunato questions Montresor's membership in a Masonic order and demands a sign. In response Montresor draws out a trowel from beneath the folds of his robe. This is a dramatic incident in itself and furnishes excellent surprise at the same time that it forecasts the manner in which Fortunato is to meet his death and introduces a stage property. This clew strengthens and makes more obvious the preceding pointer.

This tale of Poe's indicates very clearly the immense dramatic effectiveness of the dialogic clew, the hint given in conversation by one of the actors. This variety of clew is not only dramatic, it is also very easy to invent. It is not difficult to devise an ambiguous phrase or sentence and tone down its significance by hiding it in a mass of conversation, and so we find writers very fond of using this type of clew. The reader, perusing the fiction rapidly, gets one meaning and quite overlooks the *double-entendre*, or his attention is so centered on the seemingly more important that he dismisses as insignificant the most meaningful part of the whole dialogue.

The skillful and resourceful writer does not always rely on dialogue to convey the necessary clews. He may even give the clew in his own proper person. He may describe the bit of anticipatory matter directly, giving his pointers in the characterization of his main actor. Maupassant, in the opening paragraph of his tale, "A Coward," gives a summarized character-sketch of Signolles and slips in a clew by telling the reader the count had never fought a duel but was always declaring that if ever he should be called upon to engage in one he would use the pistol because it was the weapon with which he was most expert.

BUT the author need not speak in his own right. As author omniscient he may penetrate an actor's mind and by showing

us certain states of consciousness fully indicate the clew necessary for the forthcoming action or to introduce the stage property required. Kipling, in his war story "Mary Postgate" has a clew of this sort. He penetrates Mary's mind to declare she thought she heard the roar of an airplane propeller, but, looking up into the sky, was disappointed to find the heavens bare and empty. The reader thinks Mary was merely mistaken, but a moment later an airplane is introduced and Mary's mistaken impression then stands out as the official introducer of the required machine. Closely allied to the violation of viewpoint for management and introduction of clews is the use of dreams and visions as forecasters. In such cases the actor dreams a dream and the author reports it in such language and style as to make it the calling-card of the calamity waiting just around the corner.

And of course bits of anticipatory action also can be used as forewarning. Instead of having an actor speak about a given object, he may handle it, place it in a different position, and thus call attention to its existence before the moment of use. In "Without Benefit of Clergy" the burning sulphur fumes and the growing desolation of the plague-stricken city are bits of atmospheric setting, but they are also tone-indicators to prepare for the desolation that is so soon to enter and possess the soul of the bereaved Englishman.

This discussion of the varieties of clew should have indicated with some clearness the requisites of a good clew. In the first place, it must not be too patent, too obvious. Nor should it bear the earmarks of sudden conception or the appearance of having been dragged in by the heels. We are all familiar with some of the old-fashioned attempts at forecasting—such things as the author's solemn statement: "Ah, little she knew what dread events lay before her ere the close of that day." This sort of forecasting is awkward and strained and is indignantly dismissed by the discriminating reader as a patent angling after suspense. The anticipatory pointer must be simple, adequate, not too ambiguous, and, above all things, should be introduced naturally without attracting attention to itself. The reader should not consciously be aware that he is being informed and prepared for the mood or action of the fiction.

NOT only must the writer make his clews interesting, clear, and sufficiently informative, but he must provide them in sufficient number. How many clews to provide in a given story is, of course, a matter impossible of settlement on theoretical grounds. There must be enough to secure the effect desired, whether one or a dozen clews be required. The type of story, the class of clew needed, and authorial skill must govern. There is, however, one rule that may prove of value to the beginning writer. It is the theatrical rule of three. According to the adage of the stage, when he wants to impress a thing upon the mind of an audience the dramatist must first tell them he is going to do it, tell them he is actually doing it while the thing is being done, and lastly, must tell them it has been done; perhaps then the audience will believe. Refer for a moment to Miss Welles's story previously discussed. There we find the pistol deliberately introduced three times before its actual use at the moment of catastrophe. Many well-written stories, on examination, will also reveal this use of the dramatic triad.

The clews should be introduced in an ascending series. The ideal clew is cumulative and becomes increasingly important and definite as the climactic moment approaches. Recollect that at its first appearance in "Effie and Guam" the pistol is only part of interior decorations; the second time it is mentioned the heroine has taken it from the wall; the third time it is placed on the table between the tempted woman and her tempter, where it remains until its shot rings out. Each clew is carefully graduated so as to carry the reader a little farther onward in the fiction and point a little more definitely to the dénouement.

In connection with the invention and management of clews arises the question: What of the surprise story; should clews be sown in a fiction that exists solely to shock the reader by its unforeseen ending? Clew manufacture and placing is as important in the surprise tale as in any other type of story. There is no difference in the quantity or general nature of the pointers used save that in the surprise fiction it is permissible to make the clews somewhat more ambiguous than those admitted in other story genres. As in detective stories, the clews should be capable of two interpretations. The problem in such case is so to word the clew and so to

hide it in the mass of narration, that the reader will naturally and inevitably hit upon the wrong conclusion. He is led, through his own lack of mental alertness, to follow the wrong road, and is surprised when he receives something other than he expected. However, in such tales the author must be particularly careful so to arrange the pointers that the reader, looking backward over the narrative, will be prompted to say: "Why, how stupid of me! I ought to have seen that this was the only possible ending." If the clews are not such that he can say this, the clew-handling is faulty and the reader feels cheated; he has not been given a fair hand, for the author has stacked the cards against him.

"Majorie Daw" is, perhaps, one of the most effective surprise stories ever written. The end strikes the reader with unadulterated surprise, yet, if the student will but read back over the fiction, he will find pointer after pointer wherein the letter-writer hints that the girl is nonexistent. He speaks of her dream quality, the elusiveness of her beauty, of seeing her as through a haze. All these are clews placed at strategic points to prepare for the startling end; yet the reader, perusing the letters rapidly, thinks them only the romantic vaporings of a lovesick man. Could clews be more adroitly handled?

AFTER he has decided upon his clews and salted them at the appropriate points in his narrative, the fiction-writer must ask himself, "Have I told all that the reader has a right to demand?" If he cannot answer in the affirmative, the author must add the necessary information in clew, else, having reached the end of the fiction, the reader will feel cheated in not being enabled to see the logical outworking of the plot cause and effect. On the other hand, no less important is the question, "Have I told too much?" for the reader dislikes to be denied credit for ability to supply missing links.

These two questions of "enough" and "too much" the writer must answer satisfactorily. It is required of him that he plan his fiction carefully and that at the outset he know the end and all the steps leading to it. He must explain enough but not too much; must prepare for all his action and yet not anticipate it so fully as to kill suspense.

A Plot Builder

An Ingenious System of Juggling Ideas So That They May Serve as "Mental Joggers," Stimulating the Writer's Imagination

By Culpeper Chunn

STORY ideas are elusive creatures, as most writers of experience know. It is often difficult to build a plot if one has a sound basic idea to start with; but basic ideas have a way of hiding in dark corners of the mind when most desperately needed. To overcome this difficulty, professional writers find it necessary to ignite the imagination with titbits gleaned from other sources. These titbits have various origins. Some writers, for instance, keep files of suggestive newspaper clippings; others cram notebooks with promising ideas picked up here and there; and still others devise "systems" that make the production of germ

plots a mere matter of addition and subtraction.

Of the many systems in use, perhaps the simplest and at the same time the most practical is one that came into existence in the spring of this writer's fancy, and which since the moment of its birth, has always been successfully appealed to in life's darkest moments.

The Plot Builder, as our method may well be called, consists of a heterogeneous collection of "mental joggers" set down in a series of correlated groups, in such a way that, at a mere glance, various items will detach themselves and form embryo-plots, that give promise of rapid and lusty growth.

The several correlated groups, in the form of charts, are arranged as follows:

COLOR CHART

Mood

Humorous	Religious
Joyful	Serious
Gruesome	Spicy
Sad	Buoyant youth, etc.

Atmosphere

Good	Fright
Evil	Hate
Revenge	Jealousy
Love	Avarice, etc.

THEME CHART

ADVENTURE	Action	Setting	Characters	Miscellaneous
	Smuggling	South Seas	Mining engineer	Abandoned mine
	Exploring	Goldfields	Escaped criminal	Cry for help
	Gun-running	South America	"Dynamite Bill"	Pirate's cave
	War	Hangman's Gulch	College girl	Burning forest
	Prospecting	War-torn Mexico	Ex-marine	Double-cross
	Shipwreck	China Sea	Spanish senorita	Woman's skeleton
	Ranching	Congo	Millionaire's son	Derelict
	Treasure-seeking	Mountains	Physician	Desert island
	Murder	Artist's studio	French count	Jeweled dagger
Robbery	Ocean liner	Movie actress	Mummy's hand	
Abduction	R. R. station	"Lady in Red"	Lead quarter	
Supernatural	Opium dive	Scientist	Bloodstain	
Swindle	Lonely lake	Maniac	Jade box	
Espionage	Hospital	"Slinky the Priest"	Barking dog	
Disappearance	Wine shop	Author	Signet ring	
Ghost	Haunted house	Cracksman	Sword cane	

MYSTERY

Lack of space makes it impossible for us to draw up complete charts, but the foregoing will give the writer a good idea of how they should be prepared. The Color Chart is of secondary importance and may even be dispensed with, but the Theme Chart should be as complete as possible. The subject matter to be used in the latter is, of course, an affair of individual choice, but if it is to be put to constant use, the more elaborately it is carried out the better it serves. Other themes, such as Romance, Business, etc., should be charted in the same way. Under "Miscellaneous" should be jotted down any suggestive odds and ends that do not fit in under the other subheadings. A better way is to list all miscellaneous matter under other appropriate subheadings, such as the following, for instance: Names of Persons, Forms of Violence, Clews, Scenes, Names of Places, Interesting People and Events, and so on. As the various items are used they should be scratched out and new items added. Above all, arrange the matter systematically. A loose-leaf system of typed pages I have found the most satisfactory of the several plans I have tried.

THE writer may argue that the preparation of a Plot Builder calls for the expenditure of more time than it is worth. But such is far from the truth. If the writer will surround himself with newspapers from which to cull appropriate matter, a modest Builder can be made in a couple of hours. Other matter can be added from time to time, as occasion requires. And even if the Builder does require time and effort to prepare, it pays big dividends when completed. To illustrate: Suppose, for example, that we want to bend the adventure theme to our will, and after searching our minds find that we are destitute of ideas. Very well, it is only necessary to turn to the Theme Chart, run our finger over the pages until it rests on "Adventure"

and then select from the various subdivisions the following items: Shipwreck, South Seas, Ex-marine, College girl, Pirate's cave, and Desert island. Here we have the chief ingredients of a corking plot. It is not even necessary to glance at the Color Chart. *Buoyant youth and love*—here is the stuff the plot germ is made of. A shipwreck in the South Seas! Castaways—two strangers, a post-flapper and a leather-neck! Perilous landing on the shore of a desert island! Pirates! Cave transformed into a love-nest! Does any writer not under the care of a psychiatrist require more than that to make him writhe in the throes of composition? Certainly no professional writer does.

But suppose the urge ignores the adventure theme and calls for a detective story? Let it. We have but to direct our gaze at the "Mystery" section of the Theme Chart and, almost at random, pick out the following items: Murder, haunted house, French count, "Lady in Red," jade box, and signet ring. Turn these items over in your mind. A French nobleman is murdered by a mysterious person called the "Lady in Red." The murder is committed in a house said to be haunted. A green jade casket appears to play an important part in the tragedy, and a signet ring furnishes the principal clew. The Color Chart suggests that the motive of the murder is avarice and that the germ idea should be allowed to develop in a serious or, perhaps, a gruesome *atmosphere*. Well! Isn't that enough to make you roll your eyes at your typewriter—meaning, of course, your machine? If it isn't, you should get a job in a grocery store and exercise your imagination.

The Builder is not designed to turn out finished plots. The only claim made for it is that it will prove a never-failing source of workable story ideas. And what writer wants more than an idea? Give a *complete* Builder a trial. The better you know it the more you will like it.

A Matter of Policy

DON'T picture an immoral clergyman, an unjust judge, a physically brutal schoolmaster. You not only antagonize certain classes by doing so—and an editor must consider this point—but the tendency of such work is to destroy confidence in and respect for those in authority—and this is contrary to public policy and so will receive little encouragement from editors of worthwhile publications. *James Knapp Reeve.*

Some Experiences With Literary Agents

(Anonymous)

THE following statements cannot possibly be applied to literary agents as a class, therefore no exception can be taken to any part of this article. A recent article in *The Bookman* dealing with the advantages or disadvantages of selling manuscripts through an agent contains this cryptic statement: "Select your agent with the same care as you would select a lawyer. There are lawyers and lawyers."

That was the only note of warning sounded in the article, and for many people that might be sufficient, granted that they were fortunate enough to read that particular article. But in all the years I have been reading literary magazines I have seen only one article that dealt with the pitfalls that may lurk for the writer in the advertisements of certain literary agents—as opposed to thousands of articles on dealings with every type of editor. Hence the subject can well bear more light.

As to whether you should or should not sell your manuscripts through an agent, the question might depend largely on the writer as well as on the agent, and my only suggestion in that regard is to try both ways and form your own conclusions. An agent may be just what you want, and *need* (particularly if circumstances make it impossible for you to study the literary markets), but I cannot urge too strongly that you choose one who is thoroughly reliable.

How can you make sure? Alas, I cannot tell you! That is, I cannot tell you in so many words. I can give the proverbial hint to the wise. I can be specific as to examples, though naturally I cannot give the names of individuals to avoid, nor those of agents for whom I have a high regard.

The first agent with whom I had any dealings was a man whose name was already familiar to me as a writer of humor. He promptly returned both of my stories, pointing out briefly why he thought I would never sell either of them. I swallowed my disappointment and finally came to agree with him about one; the other I sold a few

months later, by direct submission to an editor, for twenty dollars.

Do you think I am giving this as an example of the fallibility of agents? Not so! If the agent referred to had not been the honest man he was, with a real desire to help, he would never have sent me that verdict. Instead, he would have adopted the tactics of another kind of agent—filed the manuscript with dozens of others in which he had no faith and so would not be led to present for editorial judgment, and after many months, during which the author waited hopefully, he would have returned the story with an ambiguous letter running something like this: "I regret that, for some reason, this has failed to please; but your work is full of promise, and I hope you will send me anything else you may have to offer." Which, of course, you would do, dear Dreamer, unless you happened to stop dreaming long enough to notice that the pages of the manuscript were still too fresh for it to have been submitted anywhere more than once.

WE'LL call that Class One which is represented by the agent who reads your story, spends your three or four dollars, and pigeonholes your manuscript indefinitely. Then comes Class Two—that of the agent who sells your manuscript speedily, but springs a little surprise: "I am sending you the check for your story, minus twenty-five per cent commission; for although my regular rate is ten per cent, I never handle short manuscripts for less than twenty-five." Now, unless the happy little success has turned your head, you will know that her printed circular should state that short manuscripts will be sold at a higher rate of commission, and that she should also state definitely how many words a "short" manuscript is understood to contain. In such an instance, I think it might be better not to submit tamely, as I in my young ignorance did, but to have a lawyer relative or friend dictate a courteous but firm letter

that would doubtless bring the author the amount really due.

Class Three is fortunately rather rare—but you might meet with a member of it, and a warning will not be amiss. He advertises for an "assistant," then gives each candidate a "sample" manuscript to revise or criticise. Then, after he has thus secured earnest, conscientious work from perhaps a hundred people, he notifies *every* applicant that he has chosen someone else. There is no "assistant," for the simple reason that none is needed. By the simple expedient of advertising occasionally through a high-class medium, the agent gets all the work done for the price of one advertisement, and he collects from Jane Smith of Oklahoma—or perhaps from *you*, who have blindly trusted this enterprising gentleman—not less than ten dollars for each revision.

IT has so happened that two of the agents with whom I have had unsatisfactory dealings have been among those whose credentials were the most dazzling, whose standing in the literary world would seem to the uninitiated to be unquestionable. If you have read literary notices in the last few years as closely as I have, you may already know that the rascally agent referred to above escaped Federal prison only by the cleverness of his defense. Meanwhile, because he has suspended operations until Uncle Sam forgets about him, Jane Smith, who is so far from New York, and who has never seen more than two or three copies of a magazine for writers, confidently tries Class Four.

This class sells your manuscript—for less per word than you, in all your obscurity, could easily get. Jane thinks it gives her offerings a better chance with the editors than would an agent who held out for more.

It might work so with editors of minor publications who are looking for literary bargains. If an editor is undecided between two stories of practically equal merit, who can blame him for choosing the one which costs his company least?

THERE are doubtless several other subdivisions, equally interesting, whether good or bad. These four are the undesirable ones I have encountered. Class Five includes the agent of discrimination and of absolute honesty, like the man I first spoke of. If you get in reply to your first offer to an agent a letter that reads, "Frankly, your story seems not only unsalable, but distinctly tame and uninteresting. The irrelevant dialogue and lengthy descriptions help produce this effect, and prevent the really good touches from showing up," etc.—well, cry if you must, or storm—which ever your temperament demands—but later, go to work on that story, or a better, and send it to the same agent, if any agent is to handle the manuscript.

Personally, I mean to try agents again, after I have written so many things that I cannot spare the time to market them. Meanwhile, I find personal letters from editors, even those who reject, the greatest possible stimulation toward better work.

I'll let you in on one more secret, dear Authors, now that I have elaborated that statement in *The Bookman*, "There are lawyers and lawyers." So too, as we have seen, there are agents and agents, and there are likewise editors and editors; and if you read your literary magazines, as well as your other magazines, very, very carefully, you'll find it comparatively easy to pick your editors. For there are at least five classes of literary agents, and only two classes of editors!

A Tautological Tragedy

Illustrating in every line an error into which writers are prone to fall.

Once in the ancient days of old,
A wealthy millionaire, we're told,
Took his murdered brother's life
And robbed him of his bosom wife.

The brother's ghostly shade that night
Appeared to him in sheeted white,
And whispered soft in accents low,
"Thy gushing tears for this shall flow."

And so it happened to bechance:
The peevid shrew's extravagance
Consumed his wealth and left him poor
And henpecked on a barren moor;

While oft he cried in clamours sore,
"O, were I as I was of yore,
I'd give my brother treasures rife
To murder me and keep his wife!"

Norman James Veeder.

Wit-Sharpener Announcement

THE winners of the March Wit-Sharpener contest will not be announced this month. Complaints from readers who state that they frequently receive the magazine too late to enter the competition, which has heretofore closed on the 15th of the month for which the magazine is dated, have convinced the editor that the time allotted is too short.

Hereafter, the contest winners will be announced in the second issue after the contest, and they will be given a full month to send in their solutions. For example, contestants will have until May 1st to submit developments of the April Wit-Sharpener. The winners will be announced in the June issue.

As this announcement will reach some who were unable to submit solutions of the March problem because they did not receive their magazine in time, it is announced that March contestants will be given until April 10th to submit solutions.

The March problem will not be repeated here. It was, as readers recall, the first prize-winning problem submitted in the February contest. The second prize-winning problem, submitted in that contest by Miss Jean L. Booth, serves as the basis for the April Wit-Sharpener. It is as follows:

Henry Dean is a banker in a good-sized city. His wife goes to visit her parents in the East for the summer, and the home-loving, quiet Henry is forced to eat out. He takes his meals at

a little restaurant near the bank; but the first time he enters the place he is surprised to see that the little waitress shies off from him and when she serves him her hands tremble.

*The next day it is the same, only the waitress seems more afraid when Henry enters. She runs upstairs and gets a tiny necklace and puts it on. Henry is surprised and curious and makes inquiries about the girl, but can only learn that she is poor, alone and bears the name of Mary Holmes. Every day she dons this tiny necklace when Henry enters and still seems afraid. One day he decides to find out the reason of it all and follows her out into the kitchen. She sees him coming, drops her tray, screams and faints. * * **

For the best development of this situation a prize of \$5 will be given; for the second best, a prize of \$3, and for the third best, a prize of \$2.

Winning outlines will be published in the June issue.

CONDITIONS: The plot outline as completed must contain not more than 300 words, exclusive of the original problem. It must be typed or legibly written. If return is desired, enclose a stamped envelope. No criticism can be given unsuccessful entries.

Manuscripts must be received by May 1, 1923. Address Contest Editor, THE STUDENT WRITER, 1835 Champa Street, Denver, Colo.

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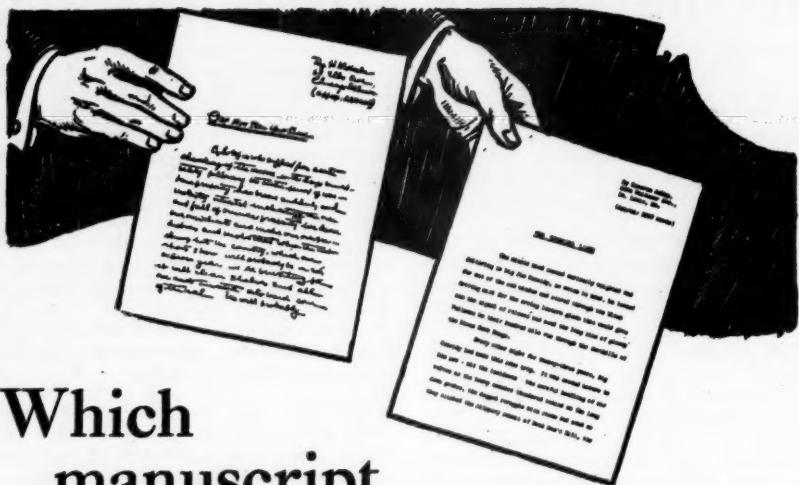
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Out of Which Anything May Tumble

WHY WE DECLINE TO BE CONSISTENT

TO provide a text for this editorial, I am tempted to publish a number of bewildered letters resulting from a mass of only partly assimilated advice.

The temptation is resisted because of the space this would require. The typical complaint I have in mind has reference to the alleged inconsistency of writers on literary problems. To put it crudely, where one authority says, "Plot is everything," another declares, "Plot is of no consequence." "Which is right?" pleads the writer.

Not infrequently, the writers of these letters imply that the editor is at fault for publishing the articles which account for their muddled state of mind. This attitude does not bother me in the least. I could, of course, make *THE STUDENT WRITER* thoroughly consistent with itself by adopting certain arbitrary tenets and eliminating everything that did not conform with them. For example, if I wanted to uphold the idea that plot is the essential thing in fiction, I could publish matter which sustained this position and refuse to promulgate any opinions to the contrary. By doing so, I would be consistent. Also I would be making *THE STUDENT WRITER* an organ of propaganda—something entirely useless to literary students.

The endeavor in *THE STUDENT WRITER* is to present as many helpful and authoritative ideas on writing as can be mustered. Through its columns the reader is permitted association with successful writers and authorities.

When authorities differ, what then?

Why, then is a very good time for the reader to do his own thinking. One author's meat is another's poison. One writer may find just the hint he needs in an interview with Joseph Hergesheimer, while another discovers that an article by Julian Kilman fits his case more exactly.

As a matter of fact, in the majority of cases, the inconsistencies are only seeming, due to lack of discernment on the part of the reader. The author who says that plot is everything probably is speaking of commercial standards. The author who tells you to ignore plot has in mind the production of literary masterpieces. Whether you shall follow the advice of one or the other may depend upon whether you prefer to become a so-called successful writer by the shortest road, or whether you prefer to starve in a garret for the sake of art. There is no great inconsistency, though there may be difference of opinion, just as there is difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in many subjects. For the man living in New York, the proper way to reach Chicago is to go west; for the man living in Spokane, the proper way is to go east.

IT is amusing for the editor to receive letters in the same mail, as frequently happens, each condemning what the other praises, and vice versa.

It is peculiar, too, that the correspondent who finds fault with a certain type of article, wants that type henceforth eliminated for good and all. He is not content that some of the articles shall be of the type he likes—it must be all or none. Naturally, if this policy were followed, a poorly balanced magazine would result. The editor has before him the ideal of publishing a great deal of matter that will interest the majority of readers, and some matter that will interest special groups.

This should not be construed as meaning that the editor does not appreciate letters of comment and criticism. Such letters are carefully considered, and where a feature seems definitely unpopular, it is dropped, while greater emphasis is placed upon the type of material which seems to have accomplished the most good. But I refuse to be slavishly consistent at the cost of depriving readers of what authoritative writers have to say for their benefit.

One correspondent writes, concerning the editorial symposium developed in the February issue by Arthur E. Scott, associate editor of *Top Notch Magazine*: "Why on earth didn't Brother Scott him to collect all those interesting items from writers to editors, then dump them into print and leave the reader to fret and flounder until he became discouraged? * * * What are the deductions of it all?"

It is true that Mr. Scott collected a number of opinions, from editors and leading writers, on why authors frequently sell one story and fall down on the next half dozen or so. These opinions were by no means inconsistent, but they varied. If Mr. Scott had digested them and drawn deductions, what would have been the result? It would have been nothing more nor less than an additional opinion.

If the reader was muddled as a result of reading what Robert H. Davis, Charles Agnew MacLean, John M. Siddall, and the other editors quoted had to say on the subject, he would have been just that much more muddled by reading what Arthur E. Scott had to say about their views.

The value in these and similar statements from editors lies in the opportunity which they give readers to form their own conclusions. The editor who passes upon your story, the critic who analyzes its faults, the authority who gives you advice, cannot think for you. The most he can do is to offer the results of his thinking, which you may be able to incorporate into your own scheme of things.

FRANKLY, the person who is incapable of forming his own conclusions—of sifting ideas and adopting those best suited to his work—lacks the gray matter that is essential to a writer. If he must be told to do this and not to do that, it would be wise for him to get a job as clerk in a shoe store. Authorship, above all others, is a craft that requires individual thinking and initiative.

This, of course, doesn't mean that you should be bullheaded or incapable of profiting from the

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ANOTHER EDITOR IS BAITED

THE STUDENT WRITER editor has been caught napping. On page 8 of the February issue was published a sketch by L. L. Thompson, Jr., under the title, "How to Bait For an Editor." This sketch was submitted with the title framed as follows: "How to Bait (For) an Editor."

The significance of the parentheses enclosing the "For" quite escaped us, and we blue-penciled them. Now that the error of our ways has been made apparent to us, we can only apologize—to the author, and to the readers, who failed to receive the full force of his irony as the title was published.

CRUMBS O' COMFORT

(*The A, B, C of Frigidity*)

"GUESS I'm beginning to get by!" cheered Remingwood de Haque Pluggsby, permitting himself to relax a moment from his "work."

"What triumph is it now!" curly-lipped his Greatest Living Critic; "sold another second-hand joke—for a nickel!"

"Ono!" hastily replied the "author," lest a sale be expected of him, "but I've moved up to Class D with the *Toast!* Got a letter—signed with one initial."

"You see," he hastened to explain while his audience couldn't get away, being in the act of discussing the mornin's mornin', "absolute zero, or clear outside the ropes, is of course when they don't come back at all, as happens when you cast pearls before *Fudge, Flim Flam* or *The Magazine of Bunk*. That usually means the condition of their treasury decided that your manuscripts evidently were lost in transit—they "have no record of" them, ignore communications requesting information as to their fate, and live on your return postage until they're paged by the statute of limitations or the receiver.

"Your're in Class A," the "unsolicited" contrib drooled on, "when they come back, but without even a stereotyped word—a charming zero-flat habit affected by *The Altwheeler*. Of course if they did send one of those cursed slips it'd make you feel bad, with its sniveling hypocrisy intimating that your stuff is superlatively excellent—for somebody else—and telling the world they'll just be delighted to see another million of your to-be-posted-back jools. Kinda foolish to curse being spared such vague, all-inclusive, never-changing rot, but *nothing at all's worse!* Br-r-r!

"Class B's when they slip it to you—thanking you for letting them see your 'article' (you happened to have sent verse that time!) and inclosing your 'manuscript' (even a half-witted office boy can see that the inclosures are *plural!*) 'Course



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Writers and beginners who want Mr. McGregor's advice or his training work should first submit one or two short stories for examination. Only talented persons can be accepted for training. Training is given either by correspondence or personally to a necessarily limited number of writers. Consultation; by appointment only. Short story manuscripts to be examined may be sent now, without fee, for a prompt careful reading and a frank report.

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you extended them no courtesies—you were trying to sell 'em something; but that 'thank you,' even though printed and uncashable—and even though you suspect a lot of 'em, such as *The Rattler*, of inclosing * * * would be pleased to see such other manuscripts as you care to submit' slips just because they're too or'n'ry to scribble 'Not buying'—takes the chill off. You can at least think you'll have a chance next crack!

"You're in Class C when you get a fake personal letter, saying—as you realize when the second or third arrives from the same bird—precisely the same as a printed slip. It's typewritten, that's all. It's the office stenog's 'Form D 9832w' or something. It doesn't apply specifically to your particular flock of MSS. inclosed, but it's signed so intimately and chummily, 'The Editors.' They know if they signed a name you'd begin submitting barrels full, probably addressed personally, while one kind word would bring you to the office by next train!

"Now I'm in Class D with the great *Toast*, by golly—which helps. Formally stated my letter is, yes—but at least showing knowledge of what sort of stuff was submitted. Signed by anonymous pluralities, yes but with an initial clew, though a one-lunger! A humane touch, too: * * * were read with interest.' Partly personally-addressed, also, which atones for the slight slip-up between 'they' and the singular 'manuscript.' And a 'kind enough to submit,' and 'thanks'—common in such but nevertheless, to an optimist, signs of The Open Door. Doesn't mean a damn thing, but real decent of 'em. Me for them!

"Class E's about the same dying-man's-straw sort of thing, but its initial-signature hits on all three, suggesting the existence at the other end of some human being or blossom out into the honest-to-gosh full-fledged moniker of ye ed (or managing

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ed or associate ed)—though not infrequently the steno he authorized to sign his name trailed her fine Italian initial in ink after his signature, discoverable only by the microscopically inclined. These rays of camouflage serene usually begin 'My dear Mr. Pluggsy' instead of the more polar 'Dear Sir' or the bald 'Sir' affected by the hard-boiled *The Bun*. Still meaningless to a bank cashier, of course.

"And so on up the scale—to the fake-personal typewritten form letter that (oh joy!) mentions the title of your chef-d'œuvre (*Cheese-ball* feints with those); the personal answer to your specific query (which usually small talks of nonapropos cabbage and kinks, it obviously requiring so many more precious editorial minutes to scrawl 'Yes' or 'No' in pencil on your query than to dictate ten lines of vague, polite *idiocy*—far's you're concerned!); the genuine letter of specific comment on your MSS. (*The Adjusted Compensation Weekly*), etc.

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"Anyhow, it's all in the way they do it!"

"Well, all I can say," iced Pluggsy's Greatest Living Critic, dividing the last remains of his egg with his napkin, "is that if you derive kudos from being turned down, you're in a bad way!"

Ray W. Frohman.

* * * *

THE PURCHASING AGENT

YOU know what a purchasing agent is, of course. You can readily call to mind some person of your acquaintance, or some person you have heard about, who has the job of buying goods for some manufacturing concern, or for some retail store.

Perhaps you have considered the position of purchasing agent as being a prosaic job.

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It was not until I got this slant on the publishing business that I began to sell material frequently enough to enable me to throw up a good job and become a free-lance writer.

And the way that I got this slant was by being in New York city and meeting a lot of editors.

For a while, when in New York, I roomed on the same floor as the editor of a leading publication who later married a young girl who then hadn't done anything much in writing but whose work now appears regularly in *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Red Book*, and so on. The most striking thing about this editor was the fact that he was all business and had a clear, common-sense, business slant on his job.

"There's nothing mysterious or secret about the job of editing a magazine," he often told me. "It's perfectly plain, perfectly simple. I've got to have in my publication each month the sort of stuff which will make people buy the magazine at the newsstands each month in ever-increasing numbers. If I can't do this, then the company will get someone who can. Do you imagine that I'm going to let any sentimental considerations or desires to help struggling authors who can't deliver the goods interfere with keeping my job? Well, I should say not."

In meeting other successful New York editors I found that they, too, have this same clear-cut, keen, common-sense slant on their jobs. That's why they are successful.

Editors aren't hard-hearted when they turn down your stuff—any more than you are hard-hearted when you turn down a salesman who comes to your front door and tries to sell something to you—they are simply humanly trying to hold their jobs and make them better.

As I say, I began to sell when I viewed all my work from the editorial slant of whether or not its purchase would make my job better if I was an editor and had a chance to buy the stuff. And I'm sure that this same sort of slant on your work would help you. Try it and see!

Frank H. Williams.

* * * * *

ERRORS OF DIALECT WRITERS

ONCE in a while some author "up East" takes a notion to write a story about "down South," and falls into errors that are at the same time laughable and maddening to people of this section. For instance, have you ever read a story which had the negroes of old "N' Orleans," seated on the levee in the moonlight, dressed in overalls dirty from the cotton fields, and bare feet patting in the dust to the tune of banjos? And do you recall that others of like color were dancing up and down the levee in some grotesque native step? If so, then you have read something that does not happen, and you have been given an erroneous opinion of our negro life. If the author had dressed the males in perfectly pressed tweed suits, put white collars on them with cute little jelly-bean bow ties and immaculate white silk shirts with red stripes; if he had smeared white powder and rouge on the

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faces of the females, and had their hair bobbed, and dressed them in white organdie that fluffed out everywhere in daintiness—then he would have come nearer the truth. Then if he had put them far down on Franklin Street, where the moonlight seldom finds its way (light from street illumination too, for that matter), and had them jazzing around to the tune of a ten-piece black orchestra—he would have been showing you the native New Orleans negro in his usual nightly haunt. No banjos, no overalls and no levee for them—they're "class."

And how often is our expression "you all" misused? Of course we know that "you" may be either singular or plural, but there are times when we feel that there is good reason for using the emphatic "all." Does not Balzac wind up one of his good stories something like this: "I have suffered enough for you all"? Does not Mark Antony harangue the crowd with "You all do know," etc.? Now, if we speak to an individual all alone we leave off the second word and say, simply, "you know"; but if we are speaking to a number of persons, and mean our remarks to be applicable to each member, then we say "you all," and rightly so. Just here is where our Northern scribes don't seem to understand us—they make us use both words when we are speaking to one person. Why, not even the densest Creole in Cameron Parish would say such a thing. They are more intelligent than that.

And "we uns"! That must be an expression born in the mind of some learned scholar of the East who was trying to devise some cunning way of revealing the striking illiteracy of the South. I have lived in this section all my life and seen those who have existed all of their lives in the swamps and marshes; who didn't even know who nor what the President of the United States was; but I have never heard that expression used.

So the light might be lengthened; but please let this be a gentle hint to those who write and those who read. For heaven's sake forbear, and give us a little of at least racial grammar.

Homer E. Turner.

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The Literary Market

(Continued from page 2)

Collier's Weekly, 416 W. Thirteenth Street, New York; *People's Home Journal*, 78 Lafayette Street, New York; *Motion Picture Magazine*, 175 Duffield Street, Brooklyn, New York; *Illustrated World*, Drexel Avenue and Fifty-eighth Street, Chicago; *Semaphor Monthly*, 1016 American Bank Building, Oakland, California; *Dearborn Independent*, Dearborn, Michigan, and *Today's Housewife*, 18 E. Eighteenth Street, New York, are reported by a contributor to be good markets for editorials.

The American Girl, 189 Lexington Avenue, New York, recently sent the following message to a contributor: "At the present time we are not buying any fiction. However, I wish you would keep *The American Girl* in mind and, around the first of June, send in any manuscripts which you think suitable for our publication."

Woman's Weekly, 431 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago, has sent word to a contributor that it is overstocked with manuscripts at present.

American Motorist, 1108 Sixteenth Street, Washington, D. C., C. H. Hites, editor, sends the following: "Much material available for our use is furnished to us by the various publicity bureaus, and our rates of payment for material from contributors are not very high. On the other hand we are always willing to give consideration to a good article and we prefer to carry a by-line over our stories. This has enabled several young writers to break into the automobile magazine writing game through a reputation made in the *American Motorist*. Anything submitted will be carefully examined and a frank opinion as to its availability for our use will be given."

Lyric West, 1139 W. Twenty-seventh Street, Los Angeles, which is listed as paying on acceptance, does not always do so, according to a contributor, who states that this magazine has held an accepted poem of his for several months, having neither published nor paid for it.

Health Magazines do not offer a very alluring market to the writer so far as remuneration is concerned. Those listed below do not ordinarily pay for material, though some of them do pay occasionally for exceptional manuscripts, usually at low rates: *Health Culture*, 1133 Broadway, New York; *Naturopath and Herald of Health*, 112 E. Forty-first Street, New York; *Critic and Guide*, 12 Mount Morris Park West, New York; *Mind and Body*, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa.; *Posse Gymnasium Journal*, Boston, Mass.; *The Hygienist*, Majestic Building, Denver, Colo.; *The Healthy Home*, Athol, Mass.; *Good Health*, Battle Creek, Mich.; *Life and Health*, Washington, D. C.; *Journal of Outdoor Life*, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York.

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Woman's National News, Modandred Publishing Company, 110 E. Twenty-third Street, New York, is an illustrated weekly newspaper, the aim of which, as stated by Alleen McKenzie, editor, is to record the activities and assist in the progress of women in general. Payment for material is made on publication, no rates being stated.

New York Lumber Trade Journal, 18 W. Forty-sixth Street, New York, S. J. Treat, treasurer and editor, needs correspondents. It pays 20 cents per column inch.

High Life, Ripley, Tennessee, sends the following through its editor, W. L. Dunham, Jr.: "Always in the market for original jokes, humorous poems, sketches, short stories with a touch of humor, and good cartoons. Payment is made on acceptance. We should be glad to consider material for our annual, *The Cannon Ball*, which goes to press in September."

National Food Magazine, Monolith Building, New York, likes to receive reports of domestic science schools on the pure food crusade and household matters, menus, receipts, etc. Some juvenile matter is used, and usually a serial story. No rate or time of payment is stated.

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The Billboard, 25-27 Opera Place, Cincinnati, Ohio, A. C. Hartman, editor, uses correspondents who can supply theatrical news. It pays good rates and remits promptly.

TRADE ARTICLE MARKET CORRECTIONS

The editor was "caught napping" in the publication of market notes under title of "Trade Article Markets" in the March issue of *THE STUDENT WRITER*. This material had been standing in type and was out of date, a fact not realized until too late. The following supplementary information should be taken into consideration by readers who were interested in the markets mentioned in the article:

Hardware Salesman was sold in December to *Hardware Age* of New York.

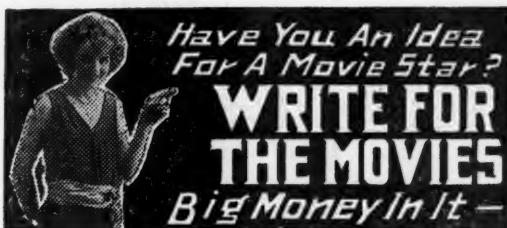
Luggage Review was suspended several months ago.

The American Seedsman has been merged with *Seed World*.

Woman's and Infants' Furnisher changed its name to *Corsets and Lingerie* during 1921. In March, 1922, manuscripts addressed to the latter publication were returned by *Inland Merchant*, 25 W. Forty-third Street, New York. *Inland Merchant* was taken over in the latter part of 1921 by the Haire Publishing Company of New York.

Candy and Soda Profits ignores requests for return of manuscripts, according to a contributor.

Shoe Repair Service is stated to be overstocked for several weeks.



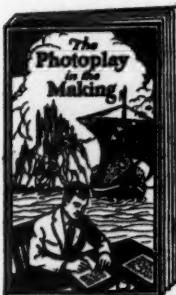
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Willard E. Hawkins
Editor

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Dear Hawkins:—

I sat up half of last night reading your book "Helps for Student Writers." It is a whale! I have read nearly all of them, but none as meaty as yours. When a man who has been writing fourteen years tells you he can get a lot of good stuff out of your book, that book is going some! Of a truth thou art my father and my mother, O ra! May The Presence live a thousand lives!

And now I'm going to slam your title. Too modest. My own reaction to it was, "H'm, something for the rank beginner; but I'll have to order it, because it is his book." So down it went on my list, but I had no idea what a really splendid thing I was ordering. Other writers on the subject tell us the same old bunk about Hawthorne and Poe, but they give their screed an authoritative title, "The Short-Story," "The Art of the Short-Story," etc., and down it goes in catalogues as one of the standard works. How often have we pros. bought such books, hoping that there might be something new in them to help us in our work! Only to find that their authors know absolutely nothing about a short-story.

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